

# Mountain LIVING

God  
Bless  
America

## From struggle to strength: How Justin Muncy learned to thrive after addiction

BY ROGER SMITH  
MOUNTAIN CITIZEN

INEZ — Members of the Kiwanis Club leaned in as Justin Muncy, a wellness coach with the Thrive Community Coalition, took the floor Thursday during a club

luncheon at Giovanni's in Inez. The guest speaker shared the story of his journey from addiction to redemption. Muncy's role at Thrive is clear-cut. He works with individuals referred by social services and the court system, people

looking to rebuild their lives after addiction. "It's somebody that's messed up and is trying to live their life differently," he said. "That's what it's turned out to be—me being a mentor. Through God, my family and all my service support, I've

learned how to live better. How I should have been living—now I do that all the time." Pausing, Muncy took a breath. "I want to thank God first. Without him, I

See MUNCY, page 6B



Kiwanis president Melissa Phelps and Thrive wellness coach Justin Muncy during the Kiwanis luncheon Thursday in Inez. (Citizen photo by Roger Smith)

## Agencies mobilize to aid Medicaid recipients

FRANKFORT — In the aftermath of severe flooding that has inundated communities across Kentucky, state agencies are working to assess the impact on some of the region's most vulnerable residents, including Medicaid recipients and home care providers. Governor Andy Beshear has declared a state of emergency as rescue operations continue, with officials urging affected residents to seek immediate assistance if needed. The Department for Medicaid Services (DMS), in coordination with the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellec-

tual Disabilities (DBH-DID) and the Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), is monitoring the status of individuals enrolled in the 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver program, which supports those requiring in-home care. State officials are encouraging anyone experiencing an emergency or life-threatening situation to call 911. For those in need of urgent but non-life-threatening assistance—such as prolonged power outages, lack of food, water shortages or difficulties leav-

See AGENCIES, page 6B



White Oak Hill ladies with Martin County Health Care Facility workers Madison Frazier, Matthew Johnson and Tawanna Nelson.

## Valentine's cards bring joy to nursing home

INEZ — A group of ladies from White Oak Hill had the privilege and honor of creating and delivering handmade Valentine's

Day cards to residents at the Martin County Healthcare Facility on Feb. 14. Their heartfelt gesture

brought joy to the residents, making Valentine's Day extra special. The group expressed

their gratitude for the opportunity to spread love and kindness in the community.

## FAFSA February: Do not leave free money on the table

February is Financial Aid Awareness Month, and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority's FAFSA February campaign reminds students to submit their Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Do not leave free money on the table. Completing the FAFSA is the first step to unlocking financial aid for college, technical school or career training. Some financial aid is first-come, first-served, so do not wait. KHEAA provides free help to students and parents who need assistance in completing the FAFSA. The easiest, fastest method is to file online at studentaid.gov. Students and parents who need help can visit kygoestocollege.com/fafsa for line-by-line assistance with the form. One-on-one help is also available by calling KHEAA's FAFSA Help Line at 888-452-7322. To find the KHEAA outreach counselor assigned



to your county, visit khea.com. You can also listen to Coffee with KHEAA podcasts for more financial aid tips, available on YouTube or your favorite podcast platform. KHEAA partners interested in participating in the FAFSA February campaign to increase completion rates can visit kygoestocollege.com for tips and a social media toolkit. KHEAA is the state agency that administers the merit-based Kentucky

Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program, as well as need-based grants and other programs to help students pay their higher education expenses. Kentucky Lottery funds pay for many of those programs. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, visit khea.com; write KHEAA at P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call 800-928-8926. In addition, KHEAA administers the KY Saves 529 program, which al-

lows families to save for college. For more information, visit www.kysaves.com/home.html. KHEAA's sister agency, the Kentucky Higher Education Student Loan Corporation, is the Kentucky not-for-profit agency committed to offering students/borrowers the lowest possible cost assistance in achieving their higher education dreams by offering the Advantage Education Loan program. For more information, visit advantageeducationloan.com/.

**TEAM KENTUCKY**  
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

**KY Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients:**

Households that lost food purchased with their SNAP benefits due to the February 15th storms and flooding have until **Wednesday, February 25th** to request replacement benefits.

Recipients who lost food bought with SNAP due to a power outage of at least four hours or flooding can call the KY Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) at:

**855-306-8959**

to request replacement benefits.

**If possible, please have your case number ready.**

## Request replacement SNAP by Feb. 25

Households that lost food purchased with their SNAP benefits due to the Feb. 15 storms and flooding have until Feb. 25 to request replacement benefits, the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services announced. Recipients who lost food bought with SNAP due to a power outage of at least four hours or flooding can call the Kentucky Department for Community-Based Services (DCBS) at 855-306-8959 to request replacement benefits. If possible, please have your case number ready.



## Two sides of Ozempic: Weight loss success and health nightmares

BY MELISSA PATRICK  
KENTUCKY HEALTH

For some, the weight loss drug Ozempic "is life-changing," but for others, "it's a nightmare," Valerie Chinn reports for WDRB. Lucinda Mason, a Mt.

Washington resident who has lost 100 pounds and kept it off, told Chinn that her experience with the drug has been positive and has dramatically improved her health. But Jacqueline Barber, a Louisville resident, told Chinn that Ozempic has

led to severe health complications, causing her to be in and out of the hospital since she started taking it in 2021. Barber suffers from severe blood clots and has been diagnosed with gastroparesis, a condition that prevents the stomach from emptying

properly, Chinn reports. "If you are taking it — or new to taking it — and you get sick, please talk to your doctor," Barber told Chinn. "I really hate to see anyone end up where I'm at. It's so depressing. It really is."

WDRB says it started

investigating Ozempic and other diabetes and weight loss drugs after learning of nationwide lawsuits, some of which include patients in Kentucky. "The lawsuits against

the manufacturers of Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and similar medications claim there are inadequate warnings about potential side effects.

See OZEMPIC, page 6A